

**Town of Arlington**  
**Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)**

Special Meeting on Symmes Transportation Issues: Monday August 9, 2004 7:15 PM

Committee members present: Elisabeth Carr-Jones, Larry Englisher, Ralph Elwell, Jeff Maxtutis, Kevin O'Brien, Ed Starr, Scott Smith

Others present (spellings are suspect): Jane Howard (Howard/Stein-Hudson), Alan Jones, Jack Johnson, Jake Upton, Patrick McMahon (both of Fish), Erik Moore, Joe Curro, Paul Morrison, Lee Ellis, Elaine Duffy, Stephan Miller, Terry Dash, Kelly Courtney

Elisabeth introduced the meeting as a special TAC meeting to discuss transportation issues relating to the Symmes property. She thanked the Arlington Redevelopment Board, Fish and the neighbors for their hard work thus far.

**1. TRAFFIC PROJECTIONS**

Elisabeth Carr-Jones noted that the Symmes Advisory Committee (SAC) required that vehicle trips be limited to those that occurred during the hospitals peak period of operation, or 375 per hour.

Jane Howard explained the derivation of the traffic number in the Howard/Stein-Hudson (HSH) memo:

- a. Start with ITE trip rates for condos and medical office use.
- b. Apply the expected modal split to them based on 2000 US Census data for those tracts in Arlington.
- c. Translate person trips back into vehicle occupancies and vehicle trips.
- d. Cases include current, 2009 no-build, and 2009 build. Traffic was assumed to increase 1/2% per year. They also did a preliminary Woodside driveway closed/open analysis. The memo was an estimate prior to the final negotiation.

She noted that a 25% capture rate was assumed for the wellness center. This is probably too high; therefore the number of trips generated will be a bit higher than what was indicated in the memo. However, it will still be well under the 375 guideline from prior hospital use. Now that the negotiation is set, HSH will do the appropriate analyses, and expects to be done by the end of August.

Jeff Maxtutis stated that he ran the numbers from ITE version 7 (land use codes 230 and 720, with 40Ksf of medical use), using the equations, with no mode split. He obtained a traffic volume (AM peak: 213 trips, PM peak: 269 trips, Daily: 2900 trips) about 30% higher than what was indicated in the HSH memo. Jeff also noted that the in the HSH memo, the daily total was very high compared to the reported AM and PM peak. Maybe another hour actually represents a higher peak.

Lee Ellis noted that the prior 375 number might be higher than actual prior peak period usage. The first VHB report was based on model of hospital at full operation, and resulted in a volume lower than 375. Later, VHB changed their methodology, by taking counts from the 1980s and then applying a correction factor for the north wing. Lee stated that the earlier report might be more accurate.

## 2. INTERSECTION WITH SUMMER ST, HOSPITAL ROAD AND BRATTLE/HEMLOCK

Elisabeth introduced the issue, noting that VHB had recommended signalization and moving Hospital Road east. There was a proposal to widen Summer Street to provide turning lanes. A plan has been submitted to MHD to coordinate the total intersection.

Jane Howard noted that a widening of Summer Street (east of Hospital Road, to allow easier right turns onto the site) is not necessary. There is a slight widening of Hospital Road planned on Symmes property to allow one inbound and two outbound lanes.

Several people noted that this is a very important intersection to the whole traffic situation in Arlington.

## 3. SUMMER STREET EAST OF HOSPITAL ROAD

Elisabeth Carr-Jones reported level-of-service (LOS) and crash statistics (1992-2000) for several intersections along Summer Street:

Location	Crashes	Comments
Grove	29	LOS F for left turn to Summer St.
Oak Hill	14	LOS F for left turn to Summer St.
Mill	18	
Mystic	54	

SAC had recommended consideration of the Oak Hill, Grove, and Brattle/Hospital Road intersections. Jake Upton noted that the community has a significant concern on cut through traffic. On Grove Street, there is a sidewalk only on the west side and it is in questionable condition.

Scott Smith stated that two previously raised concerns included pedestrians crossing Summer at Oak Hill Drive and speeding on Oak Hill Drive northbound. Possible solutions may include reconfiguring the geometry of the Summer/Oak Hill Drive intersection, and a signal at Grove. Any signal at Grove would need to be synchronized with the one at Brattle/Hospital Road.

## 4. LOWER WOODSIDE LANE AND OAK HILL DRIVE

Secondary access via the Woodside Lane Driveway has been of great interest to the neighbors.

Traffic counts when hospital was in full operation had 10% using Woodside lane. Current counts have somewhat higher % but lower total volume. SAC recommendation is that Woodside Lane remain a low volume local roadway, with no more than 10% of site volume using it. There has been one reported crash at Oak Hill/Woodside.

85th percentile speeds for Oak Hill are between 35 and 39 mph northbound, unusually high for an Arlington Street. Southbound speeds are 24 and 32 mph.

A few years ago, the town was asked to install a 3-way stop sign at Woodside Lane and Oak Hill Drive. The request was not granted because Woodside Lane volumes were far lower than Oak

Hill Drive volumes. If traffic increases on Woodside lane, an all-way stop at Woodside/Oak Hill may start to make some sense.

Another mitigation possibility would be a sidewalk on Woodside lane down to Oak Hill, should traffic increase significantly. Some of the neighbors noted that such a sidewalk might be difficult to construct and to keep clear in the winter.

Jane Howard explained that they used journey to work data from the census, to get distribution by community. Each community was mapped to a specific approach corridor. Using this approach, there was not a large overall increase in traffic on Woodside Lane, but with low volume streets, the percentages could fluctuate widely.

Should lower Woodside lane be made a one-way street?

Terry Dash stated that she performed some timings for egress from the area (Woodside Lane vs. Hospital Road). She found that for current conditions in many gateways, the faster route involved the combination of Woodside Lane and Oak Hill Drive.

## 5. UPPER BRATTLE, MILLETT and SCHOOLS

Upper Brattle and Millett Streets are private ways and the residents recently repaved Millett Street. School redistricting may affect traffic on this section. The redistricting is not yet complete, so we don't have the data on where the district lines will be. TAC needs to be in touch with the redistricting subcommittee of the School Committee.

Someone suggested posting Millett Street one-way towards Brattle. Since Millett is a private way, it is not clear whether residents need permission for such a posting.

Jane Howard noted that the project has very little traffic impact on Brattle or Millett. Redistricting may cause a somewhat greater impact. The needed traffic counts for the analysis are mostly done, with the following exceptions that may need to wait until school starts: Millett/Brattle, travel time runs. She also noted that future medical uses would be located lower on the hill, closer to Summer Street.

## 6. PEDESTRIAN, PUBLIC TRANSIT, BICYCLE

Current Symmes site conditions don't provide pedestrian or bicycle accommodation. Elisabeth Carr-Jones stated that SAC requirements include pedestrian access and a sidewalk along the property on Summer Street.

Jake Upton noted that it might be difficult to install a sidewalk on Hospital Road. One possibility is to use the old road (from the Nurse's Quarters to Grove Street) as the pedestrian access. This road, however, goes through a conservation easement area. Other issues include lighting and a link to Hospital Road/Brattle. No sidewalk is currently planned for Summer Street by the developer.

Jack Johnson noted that bicycle access via Hospital Road is difficult due to the steep grade, narrow roadway, and sharp curves. Perhaps an alternate bicycle route could be established. There is no access to the Minuteman bikeway from Grove Street

Scott Smith noted that bicycle accommodation on Summer Street should be consistent with what Mass Highway is doing along that street. This includes a paved shoulder and traffic signals that respond to bicycles. He also noted that pedestrians are very sensitive to circuitous travel.

Elisabeth stated that the MBTA was expected to continue its current #67 bus service to the site and that it had been reported to be considering adding inbound service, given the size of the development. Alan Jones noted that a bus turn-around and shelter should be considered.

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 PM.